

REMARKS

It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103 or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20-24, 27, 38-39, and 44-48 have been canceled. Claims 28-37, 40-43 and 49-50, and amended claims 7, 13, 16, 19, 25, and 26 are in this application.

Claims 1-6, 8-11, 20-24 and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Spillman, Jr. U.S. Patent No. 5,440,300. Claims 14, 15, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spillman Jr. in view of Ritter, U.S. Patent No. 5,859,873.

As previously indicated, claims 1-6, 8-11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20-24, and 48 have been canceled. Further, the applicants reserve their right to file one or more continuation applications directed to any or all of these canceled claims.

Claims 28-37, 40-43, and 49-50 were allowed.

Claims 7, 13, 16, 19, 25 and 26 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the

limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 7, 13, 16, 19, 25 and 26 have been rewritten herein in independent form to include the limitations of the respective base claims. (Note—there were no intervening claims.) Accordingly, it is believed claims 7, 13, 16, 19, 25 and 26 are allowable.

This is in response to the Examiner's statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter included in the present Office Action. To the extent the Examiner's statement states, implies or is construed to mean that the claims are allowable over the prior art of record because the Examiner believes the claims should be interpreted to include one or more features or limitations not recited therein, Applicants' attorney disagrees with such an interpretation. Moreover, it is Applicants' contention that there is no particular limitation in the allowed claims that is more critical than any other. The issuance of the Examiner's statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter should not be construed as a surrender by Applicants of any subject matter. It is the intent of Applicants, by their attorney, to construe the allowed claims so as to cover the invention disclosed in the instant application and all equivalents to which the claimed invention is entitled.

Since all of the claims now in this application have been indicated to be allowed or allowable, an early official notice to that effect is solicited.

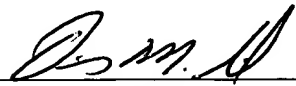
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Please charge any additional fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid

herewith to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
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